

New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program

2003 Biennial Report for Thorndike Pond Jaffrey



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Water Division
Watershed Management Bureau
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OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **THORNDIKE POND, JAFFREY**, the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations:

Thank you for your continued hard work sampling the pond this season! Your monitoring group sampled **three** times this season and has done so for many years! As you know, with multiple sampling events each season, we will be able to more accurately detect changes in water quality. Keep up the good work!

As you are aware, the Franklin Pierce College (FPC) satellite VLAB laboratory was not able analyze samples during the 2003 sampling season. This was largely due to personnel and budget issues at the college. Although the FPC laboratory was not able to analyze samples, staff at FPC continued to lend out sampling equipment to volunteer monitors in this areas. This was truly a cooperative effort between DES, FPC, and the volunteer monitors in this region. We want to thank you again for bearing with us this season. Also, we want to assure you that DES and FPC are working together to get the FPC lab up and running for the 2004 sampling season. We will keep you posted on the status of the laboratory as the sampling season approaches.

FIGURE INTERPRETATION

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** The graphs in Figure 1 (Appendix A) show the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum, and mean concentration for each sampling season that the pond has been monitored through the program.

Chlorophyll-a, a pigment naturally found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Because algae are usually microscopic plants that contain chlorophyll-a, and are naturally found in lake ecosystems, the chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity.

The mean (average) summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 7.02 mg/m³.

The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration **increased** from June to July, and then **decreased** from July to August. The chlorophyll-a concentration in June, July, and August was **less than** the state mean.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the 2003 chlorophyll-a mean is **less than** the state mean.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data (the bottom graph) shows that the mean annual chlorophyll-a concentration has **not significantly changed** (neither *increased* nor *decreased*) since monitoring began in **1990**. Specifically, the chlorophyll-a concentration has remained **relatively stable** and has been **less than** the state mean. (Note: Please refer to Appendix E for the detailed statistical analysis explanation and data print out.)

While algae are naturally present in all lakes/ponds, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater lakes/ponds, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae depend upon for growth. Algal concentrations may increase with an increase in nonpoint sources of phosphorus loading from the watershed, or in-lake sources of phosphorus loading (such as phosphorus releases from the sediments). Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate residents about how activities within the watershed can affect phosphorus loading and lake/pond quality.

- **Figure 2 and Table 3:** The graphs in Figure 2 (Appendix A) show historical and current year data for pond transparency. Table 3 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum and mean transparency data for each sampling season that the pond has been monitored through the program.

Volunteer monitors use the Secchi-disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure water clarity (how far a person can see into the water). Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment from erosion, as well as the natural colors of the water. **The mean (average) summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.7 meters.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the in-lake transparency **remained stable** throughout the summer. The

transparency in June, July, and August was **less than** the state mean.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the 2003 mean transparency is **less than** the state mean.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data (the bottom graph) show that the mean annual in-lake transparency has **not significantly changed** (neither *increased* nor *decreased*) since monitoring began in **1990**. Specifically, the in-lake transparency has remained **relatively stable** and has been **approximately equal to** the state mean. (Note: Please refer to Appendix E for the statistical analysis explanation and data print out.)

Typically, high intensity rainfall causes erosion of sediments into lakes/ponds and streams, thus decreasing clarity. Efforts should continually be made to stabilize stream banks, pond shorelines, disturbed soils within the watershed, and especially dirt roads located immediately adjacent to the edge of tributaries and the pond. Guides to Best Management Practices designed to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, nonpoint source pollutants, such as sediment loading, are available from DES upon request.

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 (Appendix A) show the amounts of phosphorus in the epilimnion (the upper layer) and the hypolimnion (the lower layer); the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 (Appendix B) lists the annual maximum, minimum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the pond joined the program.

Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's freshwater lakes and ponds. Too much phosphorus in a lake/pond can lead to increases in plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 11 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration **decreased** throughout the summer. The phosphorus concentration in June, July, and August was **less than** the state median.

The historical data show that the 2003 mean epilimnetic phosphorus concentration is **less than** the state median.

The current year data for the hypolimnion (the bottom inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration **remained stable** throughout the summer. The phosphorus concentration in June, July, and August was **less than** the state median.

The historical data show that the 2003 mean hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration is **less than** the state median.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data show that the phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) and the hypolimnion (lower layer) has **not significantly changed** (neither *increased* nor *decreased*) since monitoring began in **1990**. Specifically, the phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion and hypolimnion has remained **relatively stable** and has been **less than** the state median. (Note: Please refer to Appendix E for the statistical analysis explanation and data print out.)

One of the most important approaches to reducing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about its sources and how excessive amounts can adversely impact the ecology and value of lakes and ponds. Phosphorus sources within a lake or pond's watershed typically include septic systems, animal waste, lawn fertilizer, road and construction erosion, and natural wetlands.

TABLE INTERPRETATION

➤ **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

Table 2 (Appendix B) lists the current and historic phytoplankton species observed in the pond. The dominant phytoplankton species observed this year were ***Chrysosphaerella* (Golden-Brown), *Staurostrum* (Green), and *Mallomonas* (Golden-Brown)**.

Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season (Please refer to the "Biological Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession). Diatoms and golden-brown algae are typical in New Hampshire's less productive lakes and ponds.

An overabundance of cyanobacteria (previously referred to as blue-green algae) indicates that there may be an excessive total phosphorus concentration in the pond, or that the ecology is out of balance. Some species of cyanobacteria can be toxic to livestock, pets, wildlife, and humans. (Please refer to the "Biological Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding cyanobacteria).

➤ **Table 4: pH**

Table 4 (Appendix B) presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 5.5 severely limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.5 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The mean pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.5**, which indicates that the surface waters in state are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean pH at the deep spot this season ranged from **5.96** in the hypolimnion to **6.39** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly acidic***.

Due to the presence of granite bedrock in the state and the deposition of acid rain, there is not much that can be done to effectively increase lake/pond pH.

➤ **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**

Table 5 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historic epilimnetic ANC for each year the lake/pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Buffering capacity or ANC describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input to the lake. The mean ANC value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.7 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are "highly sensitive" to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The Acid Neutralizing Capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (the upper layer) continues to remain ***much less than*** the state mean of **6.7 mg/L**. Specifically, the pond is classified by DES as ***acidified*** to acidic inputs (such as acid precipitation).

➤ **Table 6: Conductivity**

Table 6 (Appendix B) presents the current and historic conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current. The mean conductivity value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **62.1 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The conductivity in the pond is relatively **low** and **less than** the state mean. Typically conductivity levels greater than 100 uMhos/cm indicate the influence of human activities on surface water quality. These activities include septic system leachate, agricultural runoff, iron deposits, and road runoff (which contains road salt during the spring snow melt). The low conductivity level in the pond is an indication of the low amount of pollutants in the watershed. We hope this trend continues!

➤ **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**

Table 8 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historic total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the algae's ability to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The total phosphorus concentrations **remained stable** at all sampling locations.

➤ **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**

Table 9 (Appendix B) shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) for the 2003 sampling season. Table 10 (Appendix B) shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of dissolved oxygen is vital to fish and amphibians in the water column and also to bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **high** at all depths sampled at the deep spot of the pond. Typically, shallow lakes and ponds that are not deep enough to stratify into more than one or two layers will have relatively high amounts of oxygen at all depths. This is due to continual lake mixing and diffusion of oxygen into the bottom waters induced by wind and wave action.

➤ **Table 11: Turbidity**

Table 11 (Appendix B) lists the current year and historic data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the "Other Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The turbidity of the hypolimnion (lower layer) sample was elevated on **August 20**. This suggests that the pond bottom may have been disturbed by the anchor or by the Kemmerer Bottle while sampling.

When the pond bottom is disturbed, sediment, which typically contains attached phosphorus, is released into the water column. When collecting the hypolimnion sample, please check to make sure that there is no sediment in the Kemmerer Bottle before filling the sample bottles.

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

Annual Assessment Audit:

During the annual visit to your lake/pond, the biologist conducted a “Sampling Procedures Assessment Audit” for your monitoring group. Specifically, the biologist observed the performance of your monitoring group while sampling and filled out an assessment audit sheet to document the ability of the volunteer monitors to follow the proper field sampling procedures (as outlined in the VLAP Monitor’s Field Manual). This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors are not following the proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will ultimately ensure that the samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

Overall, your monitoring group did an **excellent** job collecting samples on the annual biologist visit this season! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the biologist to provide additional training. Keep up the good work!

Sample Receipt Checklist:

Each time your monitoring group dropped off samples at the laboratory this summer, the laboratory staff completed a sample receipt checklist to assess and document if the volunteer monitors followed proper sampling techniques when collecting the samples. The purpose of the sample receipt checklist is to minimize, and hopefully eliminate, future re-occurrences of improper sampling techniques.

Overall, the sample receipt checklist showed that your monitoring group did an **excellent** job when collecting samples and submitting them to the laboratory this season! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the laboratory staff to contact your group with questions, and no samples were rejected for analysis.

NOTES

- **Monitor's Note (6/18/03):** S.W. Inlet not flowing at all this early in Season is unusual. Will have to check upstream for beaver dam or other obstruction
- (7/16/03):** Rain started as sampling began. Inlets were not dry, but not flowing. Lake level down from normal by about 1.5'. I checked inlet two days earlier and they were barely flowing
- (8/20/03):** NW and SW Inlets not flowing; no samples taken
- **Biologist's Note (6/18/03):** Great water quality!

USEFUL RESOURCES

Acid Deposition Impacting New Hampshire's Ecosystems, ARD-32, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3505, or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ard/ard-32.htm.

Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials, NHDES-WD 97-8, NHDES Booklet, (603) 271-3503.

Camp Road Maintenance Manual: A Guide for Landowners. Kennebec Soil and Water Conservation District, 1992, (207) 287-3901.

Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, RSA 483-B, WD-SP-5, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-5.htm.

Cyanobacteria in New Hampshire Waters Potential Dangers of Blue-Green Algae Blooms, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3505, or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-10.htm.

Erosion Control for Construction in the Protected Shoreland Buffer Zone, WD-SP-1, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-1.htm

Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes, WD-BB-9, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-9.htm.

Management of Canada Geese in Suburban Areas: A Guide to the Basics, Draft Report, NJ Department of Environmental Protection Division of Watershed Management, March 2001, www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/DOCS/BMP_DOCS/Goosedraft.pdf.

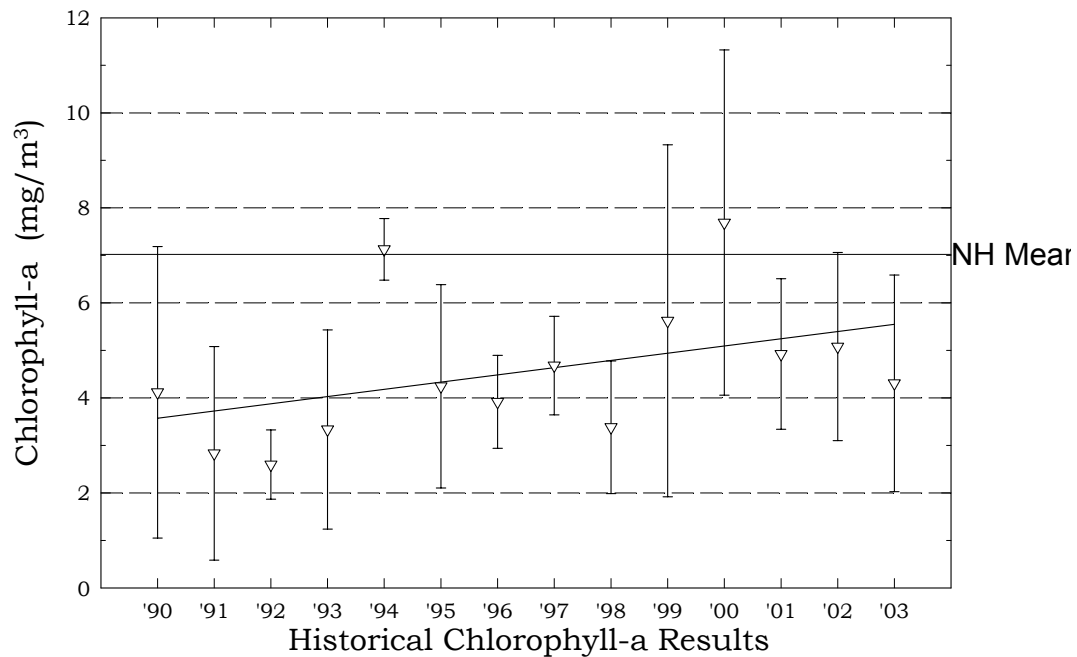
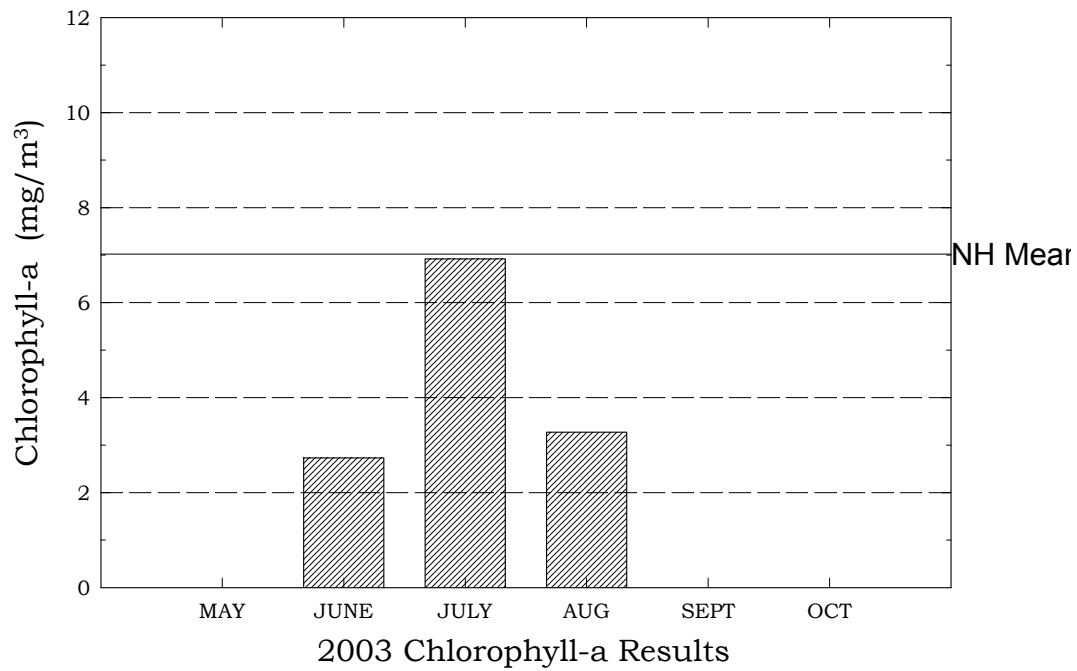
Road Salt and Water Quality, WD-WMB-4, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-4.htm.

APPENDIX A

GRAPHS

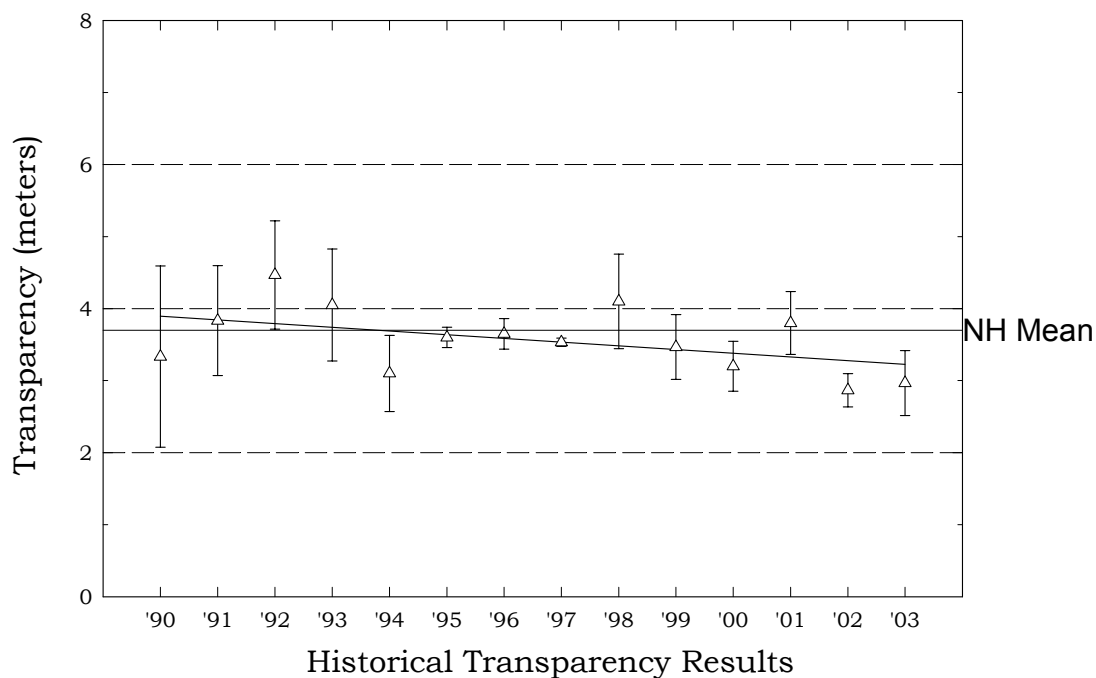
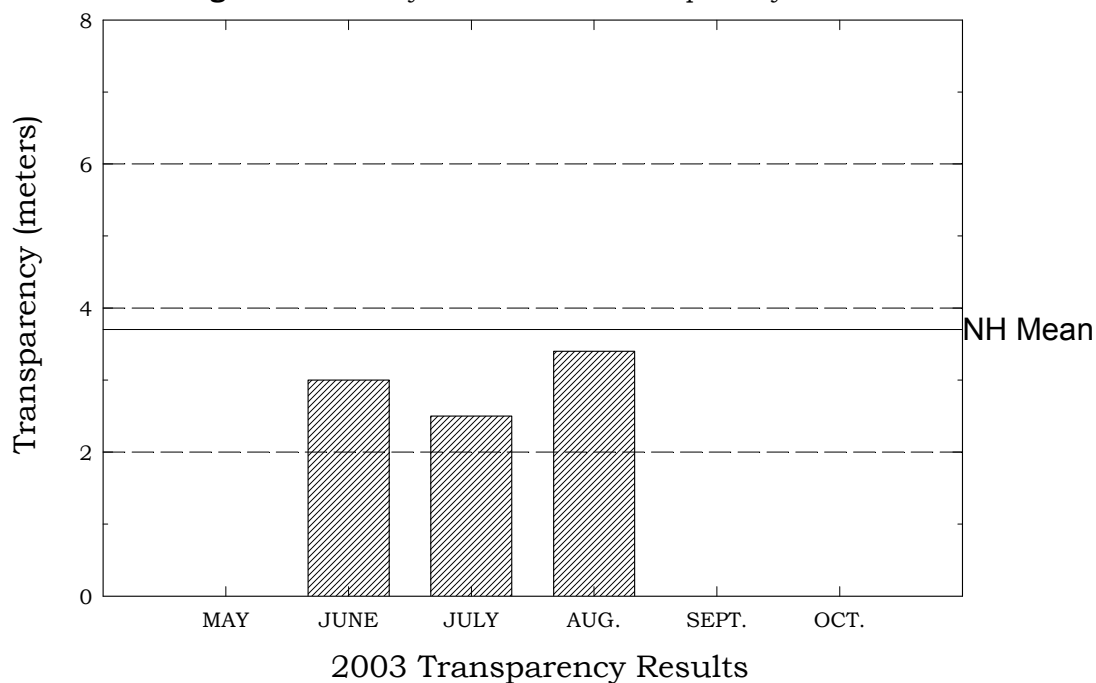
Thorndike Pond, Jaffrey

Figure 1. Monthly and Historical Chlorophyll-a Results



Thorndike Pond, Jaffrey

Figure 2. Monthly and Historical Transparency Results



Thorndike Pond, Jaffrey

Figure 3. Monthly and Historical Total Phosphorus Data.

